DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 383 270 HE 028 383

AUTHOR Rofes, Eric
TITLE Queers, Education Schools, and Sex Panic.
PUB DATE 21 Apr 95
NOTE 67p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 21, 1995).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Curriculum; *Educational Attitudes; Graduate Students; Graduate Study; Higher Education; *Homophobia; *Homosexuality; *Lesbianism; Politics of Education; School Catalogs; *Schools of Education; Sexuality; Student Attitudes; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS Homosexual Teachers

ABSTRACT

This paper examines education's role in addressing lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues, focusing on the role of graduate schools of education. It discusses the mission of schools of education and reviews points of conflict concerning the purpose of such schools. It then provides evidence of the vast array of contemporary lesbian and gay issues which confront educators, pointing out that if education schools were to fulfill the essence of their missions, considerable resources would be channeled into research, theory, and analysis of lesbian and gay issues in the educational arena. The paper also examines bulletins, course catalogs, and application materials from 16 graduate schools of education in order to assess the stated relationship between schools of education and lesbian and gay issues. It then discusses the personal experiences of an education graduate student interested in the study of gay and lesbian issues, as well as historical accounts of sex scandals and moral panics in educational institutions. It concludes by stating that the linkage of gay educators and children triggers real or imagined sex panic which functions to police many aspects of academic life. However, it urges educational leaders to find the courage to fulfill the mission and preserve the integrity of the discipline by interrogating controversial and vexing questions. An appendix lists the bulletins, course catalogs, and application materials reviewed. (Contains 99 references.) (MDM)

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QUEERS, EDUCATION SCHOOLS, AND SEX PANIC

By Eric Rofes

UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education

Social and Cultural Studies

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April 21, 1995

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Introduction

In these days when queer studies conferences attract standing-room only crowds and academic publishers aggressively compete for lesbian and gay titles, it is easy for some to imagine that lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues have achieved a respected stature throughout the academy. Because some schools offer courses, tenure queer faculty members, and strive to craft equitable personnel policies, many have come to believe that the stark silence of the 60s, 70s, and much of the 80s have been shattered.

Not so. Lesbian and gay issues stand at a critical crossroads in the educational arena in 1995. Efforts to create a scholarly sphere of lesbian and gay discourse may have been initiated but, without exception have yet to be insitutionalized. While significant achievements of the past decade cannot be denied, neither can educators pretend that the backlash against multiculturalism, affirmative action, and government funding for the arts and humanities is not related and poses no threat to queer issues in the academy. As the culture wars of the 90s escalate, it seems important for activists and academics alike to provide vigilant oversight of every academic discipline and all strata of schooling. Such concerns motivate this paper.

In an essay in Radical Teacher, Henry Abelove, Richard Ohmann, and Claire B. Potter provide a concise summary of the achievements and limitations of queer studies in the academy.[1] The authors note that much-touted advances "can easily seem more substantial than they are":

> Only a small fraction of U.S. colleges and universities offer courses in the field. Those few jobs that have been created in the field (and they are few indeed) are all, so far as we know, in English, American studies, or women's studies departments. To the best of our knowledge, no department of history or any other social science has advertised and filled a tenure-track position in lesbian/gay/queer studies at any U.S. college or university.[2]

This paper examines the discipline of education's role in addressing lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues. I have chosen to focus my study narrowly on graduate schools of education, because I believe they offer a specific and reliable window onto contemporary theory and practice of education. I begin by examining the mission of education schools and reviewing points of conflict concerning the purpose of schools of education. I then provide evidence of a vast array of contemporary lesbian and gay issues which confront educators in America. By considering these issues alongside the stated objectives of schools of

education, I suggest that if schools were to fulfill the essence of their missions, considerable resources would be channeled into research, theory, and analysis of educational practice focused on lesbian and gay issues in the educational arena.

Next I examine bulletins, course catalogues, and application materials from 16 graduate schools of education in order to assess the stated relationship between schools of education and lesbian and gay issues. In particular, I focus upon faculty research interests, school policies, and descriptions of courses. I search out work on lesbian and gay issues and "read between the lines" to suggest areas where examination of queer issues might be occurring out-of-view. I then summarize my findings, ponder the information, and draw some initial conclusions.

I then appear as a native reporter recording and analyzing experiences from my initial year as a graduate student in education interested in study and research of lesbian and gay issues. I examine key incidents involving curriculum, personnel, and educational leadership and ruminate upon my reactions to experiences related to queer identities, community formation, and intellectual exchange in schools of education. In particular, I examine my own conflicted reactions to issues of sex and sexuality as they relate to the culture and climate of schools of education.

Finally, I consider historical accounts of sex scandal and moral panics. By briefly reviewing the escalation of sex panics in the period following World War II., I suggest that they offer

a way of conceptualizing a profound and often unstated conflict which faces lesbians and gay men whose lives intersect with children and youth. By drawing on narratives of lesbian and gay teachers--and my own experiences in classrooms--I provide examples of the powerful ways that sexual shame, fear of public approbation and scandal, and tensions between identities, constrict the lives of lesbian and gay educators. I conclude by insisting that the linkage of queers and children triggers real or imagined sex panic which functions to police many aspects of academic life. Until the sex panic is no longer firmly lodged in the mind of America whenever queers and children occupy the same spaces, schools of education may continue to abrogate a key portion of their stated missions and continue to cede leadership on lesbian and gay issues to other disciplines.

The tone of this paper is intended to be one of inquiry: I seek to assess the current state of queer issues in the discipline of education and voice questions which emerge from this analysis. It is not my intent to finger-point or blame and the questions asked and issues identified are offered in a spirit of critique in which I often implicate my own actions. Because I consider the nexus of homosexuality and childhood to be a highly-charged yet complexly vexed conundrum, it is my greatest hope that this paper sets in motion individual reflections, community discussion, and collective commitment to action.

The Mission of Schools of Education

In January, 1995, the Holmes Group, released a report "Tomorrow's Schools of Education," challenging the leading education schools to rethink their purposes and redesign their programs to better serve the contemporary needs of American schools.[3] As Newsweek reported,

> They issued a bluntly worded report in which they warned that unless America's schools of education institute real reforms, they should "surrender their franchise" in teacher training.[4]

Among the recommendations of the group, comprised of educational leaders including more than 80 deans of research-focused education schools, are "make research, development, and demonstration of high-quality learning in real schools a primary mission," "correct loss of focus and program proliferation to focus on developing educators who work with young people," and "make education schools accountable to the profession and the public." The report places the needs of public schools in opposition to theoretical work on broad educational questions, and insists that schools of education aggressively link research to practice and institute profound systemic reforms aimed at transforming the education of teachers in America.

A brief look of the missions of education schools provides

examples of varied philosophical attempts to mediate these long-term tensions between theory and practice. It is often in the formal articulation of aims and objectives that institutions reveal core values and articulate organizational vision. While some may consider mission statements as empty rhetoric intended to pacify varied stakeholders maintaining disparate interests, for the purposes of this paper they offer succinct ideological statements of organizational purpose which may be used to consider questions of institutional responsibility and accountability.

A letter from the Dean of the University of Southern California's School of Education appearing in the school's catalogue, presents a mission bridging research and practice:

> Despite our size and diversity, we pursue a common mission--we seek to transform educational institutions by helping achieve significant and fundamental educational improvements for all students through the efforts of educational institutions...We seek to develop lines of research, programs of study and demonstration projects which hold promise for fundamentally improving (not merely maintaining) the productivity of our educational institutions.[5]

The dean goes on to stress the school's commitment to marginalized populations:

> Our work tends to place a non-exclusive emphasis on categories of children and adults who have historically not benefited as signficantly from educational services as have other categories of children and adults.

The University of California at Berkeley's Graduate School of Education catalogue provides a lengthy summary of the school's purpose which states in part,

> Our concern is to advance educational scholarship and practice, with the goal of enhancing opportunities for diverse communities of learners. Our programs are designed to prepare teachers, administrators, scholars, and other professionals to become leaders in their respective educational settings. As individual scholars who form a community of complementary expertise and skills, we in Berkeley's Graduate School of Education are committed to developing the kinds of understandings and practices necessary for addressing the most challenging educational issues of our era.[6]

The catalogue then delineates a two-fold mission:

> o to engage in research and development of the highest quality at the very forefront of educational inquiry and invention, and

o to provide unexcelled leadership, training, and service for the education community.

These two schools' mission statements typify the public presentation of overarching objectives of the 16 education school catalogues scrutinized. Schools of education appear to put forward visions of themselves as committed to cutting-edge research in the service of the lived-reality of schooling in America. In statements mirroring Berkeley's aim to address "the most challenging educational issues of our era" and USC's interest in serving those "who have historically not benefited as significantly from educational services," many express a commitment to cutting-edge issues and underserved communities. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst's School of Education's mission reflects these concerns as well as offering an explicit commitment to "social justice" and "diversity":

> The School of Education is dedicated to enhancing the practice of education through research that informs both the preparation of educational professionals and the development of public policy that affects education. Our approach is shaped by our fundamental commitment to social justice and diversity and by our belief in the essential importance of national and international perspectives as we approach the improvement of education.[7]

The graduate catalogue of Wheelock College in Boston, articulates the school's purpose and provides a statement of the kinds of diversity valued:

> The mission of Wheelock College, the improvement of the quality of life for children and their families inspires an honorable calling to the human service professions. This mission is carried out by providing a sound professional and socially responsible education for graduate students...The Graduate School is committed to preparing professionals who can respond to the pressing social challenges of our decade...Diversity in age, gender, sexual orientation, and in socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds is essential to the success of these efforts."[8]

University of Chicago's Department of Education catalogue includes a succinct mission summarized in a sound bite: "to add to, preserve, and disseminate human knowledge." It goes on to express the school's commitment to assisting "policymakers and practitioners at all levels of education," who "turn to the Department for insight and guidance in the analysis of problems and for programs of professional preparation."[9]

As a class, schools of education appear to incorporate at least three key objectives in their missions:

1) to "help ensure the survival of the present and future generations with improvement in the quality of life" (University of Wisconsin, Madison)[10]

2) to be "responsive to the needs and realities of education" (Boston University)[11]

3) to "serve all the people of the state and indeed the nation as a center for scholarship and creative endeavor" (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)[12]

These could be summarized as a threefold commitment on the part of the sector to improve quality of life, respond to the contemporary needs of schools, and serve a broad and diverse population.

Lesbian and Gay Issues Confronting American Education

The casual American observer is aware that in the 1990s the field of education is facing a vast array of challenges. Policy matters such as student assessment, school choice, and educational financing, curricular debates involving standards, canons, multiculturalism, and bilingualism, and operational issues such as questions of school size and innovative forms of

governance, are just a few of the daunting items on the to-do lists of educational leaders. With public battles raging over reform, restructuring, and the redesign of systems of schooling, queer issues in education may seem like simply another "special interest" demanding time, energy and resources from exhausted organizations. A backlogged legacy of resentment carried by those who view multiculturalism as "political correctness" and affirmative action as "reverse discrimination," may explode at the mention of sexual identity as a compelling matter meriting attention at the highest level of leadership. Yet the missions of education schools suggest that the sector may be held accountable for addressing policy, curricular, administrative and philosophical matters involving lesbians and gays.

A review of recent news items about schools suggests that pressing issues involving these areas are occupying increasing amounts of time on the agenda of school committees and school administrations, and appearing with greater frequency and visibility in classrooms throughout the nation. Faced with a range of thorny issues which few have acknowledged, studied, or analyzed, practitioners and researchers alike are left without rudimentary information which might "add to, and preserve, human knowledge" about lesbian and gay concerns. A recounting of key incidents, controversies, and policy questions which have arisen in the past five years illustrates ways in which knowledge of and experience with queer issues are increasingly critical to effective educational theory and practice throughout the nation.

At the highest level of national policy-making, political leaders have come close to enacting legislation which takes punitive action against public schools for serving a specific population of children and youth. In August, 1994, as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Act which supplies public schools with $12.5 billion annually, the United States Senate voted 63 to 36 to withhold funding from schools which provide support to gay, lesbian, and bisexual students.[13] A similar bill was approved in the House of Represenatives.[14] Constituent groups had to organize quickly and take public positions on this controversial legislation. Six national education organizations, including the National Education Association, the Parent Teacher Association, and the National School Boards Association, united in sending a letter to Congress which challenged the anti-gay amendments as a violation of local school control. While the anti-gay language was struck from the bill in negotiations between the House and Senate,[15] current Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich continues to label support and counseling programs for gay and lesbian youth, "recruitment,"[16] and at least one Congressman is amassing information to document public schools which "promote, encourage, or fund homosexuality," and press for the prohibition of future funding.[17]

Ironically, during the same period the U.S. Department of Education internally wrestled with questions surrounding lesbian and gay participation in the workplace. The department revised

its nondiscrimination statement to include the category of "sexual orientation." Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley told reporters, "We cannot tolerate discrimination in any form; we continue to pursue management practices that make equality of opportunity and respect for civil rights an integral part of all decisions that affect the workplace."[18] At the same time Riley signed the revision, one journalist reported that the department had resisted recognizing the formation of an employee association of gay, lesbian and bisexual staffers[19] and a department employee publicly challenged the sincerity of the Secretary's assertions, insisting that "a means of addressing grievances filed under the new statement" had not been developed.[20]

Public officials and formal government bodies committed to addressing youth suicide have increasingly grappled with evidence implicating anti-gay and anti-lesbian cultural biases and documenting queer youth as a primary at-risk population. A 1989 U.S. government Task Force on Youth Suicide recommended development of specific programs targeting gay and lesbian youth, acknowledging, "Gay youth face rejection and abuse from family members and other youth and are often unwelcome in youth groups or recreational activities."[21] After the document was attacked by conservatives, Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan repudiated its findings, being sure to drive home his personal strong commitment to "traditional family values," and insist that "the views expressed in the paper run contrary to that aim."[22]

More recently six members of Congress sponsored a bill which would establish a National Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth Suicide Prevention to address increasing public concern surrounding this issue.[23] U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jocelyn Elders (shortly before her forced resignation) decried the "alarming rate" of gay teenage suicide conceptualizing what had become a politicized issue as a "public health problem."[24] As youth advocates, educators, and the Right engaged in increasingly strident debate on the role of public institutions in ameliorating gay youth suicide, the problem was brought home to the nation's community of activist gay teenagers by the suicide of 17 year old E.J. Byington, a prominent queer youth activist in San Franciso.[25]

In addition to federal legislative assaults, gay, lesbian, and bisexual students faced an array of attacks on their right to full participation in schools throughout the nation. The student council of a Seattle area high school passed a measure banning openly gay students from serving in school government.[26] A 16 year old student at a Catholic high school near Toledo was given detention by a teacher for wearing a T-shirt saying "Boycott Homophobia" to the school's T-shirt day. The young man appealed his case to a school dean who lifted the detention.[27]

A young bisexual woman went public after dropping out of high school in Maryland, citing taunting and harassment from students after her sexual orientation was revealed following the publication of a review she had written in the school newspaper

of a book about a gay male couple.[28] A Wisconsin school district was sued by a nineteen-year-old who insisted the school was unresponsive to his complaints after repeated harassment and physical abuse from fellow students. The student and his parents have claimed the principal told them "boys will be boys," and indicated the youth had been flaunting his sexuality.[29] The Seattle-King County Public Health Department issued a report documenting 17 incidents of harassment and violence against the state's gay and lesbian students in 1990, including students being beaten, spat upon, stalked, rubbed against, and pursued. The report includes the rape of one young woman who was forcibly kissed by three girls who told her, "We don't want your kind, lesbian. Leave." The document indicates that three students in the state had been physically injured and one had to be hospitalized as a result of an anti-gay attack.[30]

Academic studies have begun to appear which detail the conflicts facing queer students in a variety of settings, including schools. One study which focused on Canadian lesbian high school students, spelled out the stark options which young lesbians believe are available to them:

> a) concealing their sexuality and remaining invisible;
> b) coming out publicly and putting up with harassment;
> c) seeking a gay/lesbian community outside the school--an option not often possible for rural youth; and d) leaving school.[31]

Another study focused on incidents of victimization due to sexual orientation among members of organized social groups for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth in 14 cities. Researchers found the following types of victimization reported by respondents as occurring at least once: verbal insults (80%) threats of attack (44%), vandalism (23%); objects thrown (31%); chased or followed (30%); spat upon (13%); assault (18%); assualt with a weapon (9%); sexual assault (22%).[32] This same study found that 22% of male participants and 29% of female particpants had been hurt by another student and 7% of those surveyed had been hurt by a teacher because of their sexual orientation.[33]

Non-gay students, administrators, parents, and fellow teachers in the 1990s must coexist with teachers who refused to dissemble, lie about, or avoid disclosure of lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity. Teachers continue to come out in the nation's urban, suburban, and rural schools. Alta Kavanaugh, an English teacher at Alessandro High School in Hemet, California came out as she was teaching a unit on prejudice.[34] In the conservative, rural community in which she teaches, Kavanaugh discovered that "her fears about coming out were worse than the reality." Rodney Wilson, a 28-year-old teacher at Mehlville High School in suburban St. Louis, found support from students and parents, but received a "gag-order" memorandum from school officials focused on discussion of gay topics which fall outside the formal curriculum.[35] During public hearings in Rhode Island on a

statewide gay rights bill, Rhode Island's Teacher of the Year for 1994, gay elementary school teacher Marty Perry told legislators, "I can legally be fired tomorrow for testifying before you tonight...That's not right. We only ask that you judge us on our merits, not on our orientations."[36] A variety of parallel issues have emerged in schools due to increasing particpation by openly lesbian and gay parents.[37]

State policy-makers have increasingly involved themselves in educational matters involving lesbian and gay issues. In Mississippi, the Senate voted to withold money from schools which taught "homosexual or bisexual behaviors," despite a state education official's insistance that no public schools do so.[38] While a school board in Chappaqua, New York unanimously passed a proposal prohibiting discrimination against gay students,[39] when the Board of Education in Washington state adopted a non-discrimination clause including "sexual orientation," six districts petititioned the board to remove the clause.[40]

Local school systems have been the site of several major confrontations including questions about lesbian and gay issues in the curriculum, openly gay students or teachers, and library and classroom materials addressing gay issues. Daddy's Roommate, a picture book for children which depicts a child's gay father and his male partner, was at the top of the American Library Association's list of books which people attempted to ban in 1994.[41] Heather Has Two Mommies and Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, two books which also include gay content, also appeared on

the list.

In Iowa, the Des Moines school system established a non-discrimination policy including "sexual orientation," which resulted in the formation of an advisory committee by the superintendent who charged it with recommending a plan for follow-up policy and curriculum changes to the school board.[42] After a school employee provided the director of a local anti-gay group with a copy of the draft curriculum proposal in December, 1994, the anti-gay group promptly enlisted the services of a conservative talk-radio host who attacked the proposal daily. A subsequent rally drew 3,000 people and the following school board hearing attracted 1,500 participants. Within a month, the school board, acting on the superintendent's recommendation, killed the proposal and terminated the advisory committee. A school board member who had been elected to the position for a dozen years, (and also the father of two students and a partner in the state's largest law firm), closed the board meeting with a speech acknowledging his gay identity. He subsequently received repeated death threats, and began wearing a bullet-proof vest to work.[43]

In the early months of 1995, Fairfax County, Virginia, was the site of contentious debates about the inclusion of lessons on homosexuality in the district's high school sex education programs.[44] 500 people packed a school board meeting which heard demands to remove the coordinator of the Family Life Education Program because of his alleged membership in a gay caucus of the

National Education Association, and accusations that the program's source book for instructors contained obscenities and pornography.[45] School Superintendent Robert Spillane at the meeting stated his intent to remove the manual because it had been "so badly misinterpreted."[46] The school board voted 7-5 to retain the lessons on homosexuality but eliminated the teacher sourcebook.

In 1994, Massachusetts Governor William Weld signed into law legislation protecting gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth from discrimination and the state board of education approved a set of recommendations intended to ensure the safety of queer students in schools.[47] The Governor initiated funding for the "Massachusetts Safe Schools Program" which aims to ensure that "gay and lesbian students feel safe and supported in their schools."[48] Over half of the state's school districts have created policies protecting youth from sexual orientation-based harassment and over a third offer teachers training on issues facing lesbian and gay youth.[49]

In perhaps the most visible local controversy involving gay issues, the 443-page multicultural "Children of the Rainbow" curriculum was the focus of exhaustive and divisive debates in New York City. While the document contained limited references to lesbians and gays (a reference to families with homosexual parents in a three-page section on family structure and three stories about lesbian and gay parents in the bibliography), these few citations ignited fierce political battles in one of the

nation's centers of lesbian and gay community organizing.[50] Battles over the curriculum proposal created deep divisions along racial and class lines[51] and, in the opinion of the New York Times, resulted in the ouster of Schools Chancellor Joseph Fernandez.[52]

Gay and lesbian issues also are asserted at the college level with increasing frequency. A class at Kent State University, "The Sociology of Gays and Lesbians," brought forth "strenous objections from some students and state legislators," despite its popularity among many students.[53] The University of Idaho was the site of protest after a sign was left on the dorm room of a gay student which read, "We, the men of Upham Hall, do not care for faggots. In fact, get out."[54] At the University of New Mexico, gay and women's studies journals were defaced with swastikas and obscenities.[55] Northeastern University's expansion of its affirmative action policy to support the hiring of lesbian and gay employees was the subject of an approving lead editorial in the Boston Globe[56] but ignited debate among faculty and students on campus.[57] Boards of trustees have debated continuing participation in ROTC programs, given the tensions between school anti-discrimination commitments and the military's anti-gay policies.[58]

Conservative students ignited public debate and legal action by pressing for the removal of funding and banning of student gay organizations on a variety of campuses, including Yeshiva University, University of Minnesota, University of Arkansas,

University of Texas at Austin, Indiana University at Bloomington, and Stephen F. Austin State University.[59] The University of Notre Dame barred a lesbian and gay student group from continuing to hold meetings at the university's counseling center.[60] Students at Loyola College in Baltimore took out a full-page advertisement in the student newspaper calling for cancellation of a human sexuality seminar which included views of homosexuality different from traditional Catholic teaching.[61] A lesbian professor at Sacramento State university faced a $2.5 million sexual harassment lawsuit from a male student for discussions about lesbian sexuality in a sex education class during which he claimed "the professor had made it clear she is a lesbian and tried to intimidate men in the classroom."[62]

Studies of campus climates concerning gay, lesbian, and bisexual students, faculty, and staff indicate that "beliefs that gays are sick and unnatural and deserve to be punished are widely held--and acted out."[63] One study of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students found that students felt unsafe in discussing sexual identity in classes and a lack of support from faculty members for research on lesbian and gay issues.[64] Another college campus study delineated "hostile and unpleasant incidents" reported by students ranging from "the tearing down of posters for gay, lesbian, and bisexual events to being addressed with hostile remarks such as 'hey, faggot' or 'bash them back into the closet.'"[65] A survey of attitudes towards lesbian and gay men conducted at "a large public research university," found the

majority of responses to be "oppositional" or "hostile," (52% of the faculty/staff and 57% of the student comments).[66]

These are simply highlights of a vast panoply of issues and incidents which confront education in America. From Rhode Island to Seattle, Des Moines to Mississippi, and Virginia to California, urban, rural, and suburban schools alike face daily a range of serious questions with tremendous legal, moral, and educational implications which did not present themselves twenty years ago. Who is responsible for preparing teachers to respond to a 15-year-old lesbian who is harassed by peers? What kind of training assists a school committee facing a decision about whether Gloria Goes to Gay Pride belongs in the library? When a school district seeks research to determine potential impact of an openly gay teacher working with kindergarteners or the legal rights of queer students to organize, to whom can they turn?

Schools of Education and Queer Issues

I review the catalogues of education schools once again, this time to assess the sector's leadership efforts on lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues. As part of this paper, I contacted the schools ranked #1 - #10 on the list of top graduate schools of education in the nation compiled by U.S. News and World Report. The study considered faculty resources, student selectivity, research activity, and reputation as primary determinants for

ranking.[67] Of the schools contacted, I received application materials from 9 institutions. While some schools are organized in a way which centralizes all departmental materials into a single mailing, for other schools I requested and received distinct materials from specific divisions. For two schools, I had incomplete materials. I contacted ten additional schools in an attempt to include schools with diverse locations, program size, and philosophies in the survey, and received materials from seven of these schools. The sixteen education schools which form the foundation of my study are listed at the end of this paper.

During a three-week period, I reviewed each education school's documents twice. My first reading was intended to gain an overall impression of the way the materials represented the school's mission, philosophy and divisional structure, and to annotate specific references related to the school's work on lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues. My second review was a close, careful reading in which I highlighted specific course listings which might include discussion of sexual orientation matters, as well as faculty research interests, and pertinent policy statements. I also noted specific omissions or references which raised questions for me concerning things unstated or presented in a manner which suggested possible linkage with sexual orientation issues.

After the second reading, I created a chart for each education school including every reference I had noted. I then coded references in broad categories, including "classes,"

"faculty," "mission," "policies," and "silences." I also attempted to articulate a general impression I gained from reviewing each package of materials about the institutional involvement in queer issues and trace my impression to specific items referenced in or absent from documents (lack of non-discrimination policy protecting lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, for example). I then created a master chart of all 16 education school material packages studied, and developed a collective portrait of these institution's stated involvement in the issues under study.

Faculty

Most of the materials I obtained from schools included information on faculty areas of expertise or research interests (12 of the 16 schools). Some of these were superficial, including just a few words summarizing an individual's focus (e.g. "curriculum/ planning/evaluation" or "foreign language education"), but most were extensive enough for faculty to spell out areas of concentration, explain specific research interests, and list publications, awards, and positions in research centers. One school allowed faculty members to include personal interests and family information and several included photographs of each professor.

This area of investigation found little explicitly-stated evidence of teaching, research, or publication in the area of lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues in education. The school which

provided the most extensive space for profiles contained no direct references to these matters in any of the 53 faculty members featured. Two faculty members in all the schools studied mentioned work in these areas in biographical sketches. Describing a book she co-edited, one professor of educational organization, administration and policy wrote "the volume calls up the voices of young people to speak as interpreters of culture--among them lesbian and gay students,..." A male associate professor working in developmental psychology is described as studying "barriers to safe-sex practices in Latino gay men." One additional school identified a staff member in the list of adjunct/associate faculty with the title, "Founder and Director, Program for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Concerns." Hence three of the 16 schools whose materials were studied provided indication of any faculty interest in lesbian, gay, and bisexual studies.

It was interesting to note that several faculty members who have exerted leadership in research and publishing on these issues are identified in ways which do not include references to work on issues of sexual orientation. One leading teacher and researcher is recognized for work on "leadership issues of equity and multicultural education" and a book he edited which includes significant focus on sexual orientation is referenced, but is not made explicit by the book's title. A professor who is a leader in utilizing cutting-edge queer theory is identified as interested in "postmodern theories," "critical social theory,"

and "cultural studies," but gay issues are not stated. Several professors are identified as maintaining interests in "gender issues" and "sexuality," but it is not clear whether this reflects active research interest and support for studies of lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues. The limited references in faculty descriptions to things queer contrasts with professors whose areas of interest and publications include references to the serious concerns of disabled students, women's lives, linguistic minorities, deaf children, at-risk youth, and students of color. The many references to research interest in "multicultural education" may or may not reflect commitment to issues related to sexual identities.

Courses

All 16 of the schools provided materials which contained listings of education classes, although I did not have complete course listings for two of the universities which provide separate packages of materials for distinct divisions. Among the schools studied, two courses specifically mentioned sexual orientation in the title: a clinical psychology course, "Transference and Countertransference Arising from Differences in Age, Gender, Racial, Ethnic, and Sexual Orientation Backgrounds," and a module (one-half semester class) entitled "Staff and Curriculum Development for Anti-Homophobia Education." One university offers a class titled "New Theories, New Pedagogies," which includes "an overview of prominent recent theoretical

trends such as post-structuralism, feminism, ethnic and gay studies." Another school identifies "sexual orientation" as an area of inquiry in a course on "Anthropology and Education." These are the only additional education school classes located which utilize the words "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual," "homosexual," or "sexual orientation" in the catalogues' summary description of courses.

Various classes neither exclusively focused on gay issues nor titled or described in ways which identify them as gay-oriented appear at several of the education schools. Classes titled "Perspectives on Human Sexuality," "Psychology of Sexuality," "Human Sexuality Education," and "Sexuality and Disability" appear in counseling and educational or school psychology divisions. Courses such as "Promoting Sexual Responsibility in the Era of AIDS," "AIDS Education," and "Talking with Children About HIV/AIDS" are being offered. A variety of classes on child and adolescent development identify sexuality as an area of study. Classes such as "Education in a Pluralistic Society," "Democracy and Education," and "Social Diversity, the Constitution, and Educational Reform" might be appropriate forums for discussion of current policy matters related to gay issues but do not mention such topics in catalogue descriptions. One university offers "Critical Issues in Education," and lists five possible topics, none of which involve sexual orientation.

All the schools offer classes which discuss multiculturalism

in education. Such courses serve as possible sites for exploring issues of sexuality and sexual orientation related to American education. Yet titles and descriptions of these classes almost universally omit references to gay issues. Classes such as "Seminar in Multicultural Counseling" often define "multicultural" strictly in terms of race/ethnicity. Because descriptions and titles frequently spell out certain focuses it is unclear whether inquiry into others is encouraged or supported. One class is titled "Problems in the History of American Education: Race, Gender, and Social Class." A course description for "Diversity: Implications for Recruitment and Retention" begins "Students will explore aspects of cultural diversity and multiple oppressions (race, class and gender)." "Teaching English in Diverse Social and Cultural Contexts" is described in part as "A seminar examining how gender, class, race and ethnicity issues inform instructional goals..." Sexual orientation goes without mention.

Policies

Twelve of the 16 education schools appear to maintain non-discrimination policies on the basis of sexual orientation. Three of these are worth commenting upon. One school articulates a sexual orientation non-discrimination policy in the university's overall book of "courses, degrees, and information."[68] It features here also a "domestic partners"

policy including same-sex couples. Yet the School of Education's bulletin for the same period, while including same-sex couples along with heterosexual couples in "married couples" housing, states that the university,

> ...has long had a tradition of admitting students without regard to sex, race, age, handicap, creed or national origin. Accourdingly, the School of Education seeks to enroll a student body representing diverse backgrounds, viewpoints and interests, and is particularly interested in applications from members of underrepresented ethnic minorities.[69]

This may be a simple matter of oversight. Two additional schools, however, indicate a distinction between the constituting of sexual orientation non-discrimination policy and other forms of protection. One catalogue states:

> In accordance with federal and state laws, no person...shall be subject to discrimination on the basis of age, religion or creed, color, disability, national origin, race, ethnicity, sex, marital or veterna status. Additionally, Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 28 and the University Board of Trustees Policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.[70]

Another catalogue states,

> Among the traditional factors which are generally "irrelevant" are race, sex, religion and national origin. It is the policy of [the university] that an individual's sexual orientation be treated in the same manner. The policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation does not apply to the University's relationship with outside organizations, including the federal government, the military, ROTC, and private employers.[71]

Three schools do not include "sexual orientation" in stated non-discrimination policies in their catalogues and two of these institutions are located in cities which maintain municipal legislation banning discrimination on this basis.[72]

As indicated above, several schools articulate special domestic partners policies which allow same sex couples to share what was formerly "married student" housing.[73] One school featured "sexual orientation" in a mission statement which included discussion of diversity issues.[74] Another includes the following statement in the second paragraph of the description of its Teacher Education division:

> All programs require students to become knowledgeable about the development of children and youth; to value

and support human diversity in terms of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status...[75]

Finally, I was able to locate only one funding source targeting lesbian and gay academic pursuits. Teacher's College lists:

> James S. Scappaticcio Fellowship Fund in Clinical Psychology (1991)
>
> Established by gift and subsequent bequest from James S. Scappaticcio (Ph.D. 85 M.S. 82) in hopes to further facilitate communication among students, both gay and not, and faculty, both gay and not, about sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular.
>
> Awards: annually up to two self-identified gay men or lesbians newly admitted to the doctoral program in clinical psychology.[76]

Analysis

The limitations of a study of university catalogues and application materials are significant. Course listings may or

may not reflect actual offerings which occur in education schools during a particular time frame. "Special topics" seminars may be offered focused on this study's areas of interest but not appear in the catalogue because they are offered irregularly. New faculty members pursuing lesbian and gay research interests may have been hired to work at education schools in the time period after the faculty listings were produced. Some faculty members, as noted above, are likely to pursue an active interest in queer studies in education which is not reflected in the catalogue and course materials. Furthermore, schools which are not included in the study may be conducting signficant research in this area and offering specific gay-focused courses to students.

Yet an analysis of the existing data, with these limitations in mind, may prove useful to gaining a general sense of the public representation of lesbian, gay, and biseuxal issues within schools of education. The schools studied here do not provide students interested in applying for graduate study of gay issues in education with a rich, easy-to-identify pool of faculty members who share such interests. It is likely that such students, after reviewing application materials and catalogues, might come to believe that such research pursuits are unusual or unsanctioned by many of these institutions. Opportunities for mentorship, funded research, and collegial discourse on queer topics may seem to be limited in schools of education.

These impressions are reinforced after considering the ways in which sexual orientation issues are silenced or only

occasionally referenced in listings and descriptions of courses. Once again, potential students would not easily identify specific programs and courses which would directly focus upon gay and lesbian issues in curriculum, administration, policy, and methods. Creating a graduate program with significant emphasis on this area would appear to require considerable independent work extending beyond formal course offerings. While some students might be able to pursue lesbian, gay, and bisexual interests in classes focused on sexuality, multiculturalism, and democratic education, such efforts seem to necessitate significant student initiative and independent work outside of course curricula.

A look at the annual meeting program for the 1995 American Educational Research Association supports a similar analysis. Interested researchers cannot easily identify significant programming which directly focuses upon gay and lesbian issues. While "gay/lesbian studies" appears in the subject index of the program, only 3 of the conference sessions (a total of 13 individual presentations) are focused specifically in this area and I was able to locate only an additional 5 individual presentations in other sessions which specified queer content. Hence it appears that 18 of 6,000+ presentations, or .003% of the conference's programming is explicitly targeting lesbian and gay issues."

The analysis above raises a range of questions concerning the role of education as a discipline and particularly

educational schools in addressing the vast range of contemporary manifestations of lesbian and gay issues in American schools. The author has personal knowledge of work being pursued by individual faculty members and students at some of the universities whose materials are a part of this study. As I have indicated above, key educational leaders who have made pioneering contributions to this field of inquiry, are not readily identifiable as maintaining such interests by a simple perusal of formal education school materials. It is difficult to assess whether faculty members self-censor, simply choose to omit their work on gay issues, or if the public relations staff and admissions officers who assemble these materials attempt to minimize "controversial" references.

Are we in a period when inquiry on queer issues is beginning to occur within schools of education but, through a variety of mechanisms, is isolated from the formal, public documents of the schools? Do educators maintain resumes which privilege traditional or publicly-sanctioned areas of inquiry over pursuits which might be considered risky, controversial, or forbidden within the discipline of education? What role do economic factors such as fellowships, job opportunities, tenure decisions, and research funding play in privatizing, silencing, or preventing education schools from fulfilling their missions' responsibilities towards the vast range of queer issues impacting contemporary theory and practice?

One Graduate Student's Story

As an openly gay man with a primary interest in issues surrounding lesbian and gay issues in schools, the application process for graduate schools of education raised many questions for me. Was my area of interest appropriate to schools of education or should I direct my attention instead to programs focused on sociology, law, social work, or queer studies? How would my resume and graduate school application be received if I included activities and publications which made my interest explicit? If I chose to pursue these studies in a school of education, which university would offer me an environment where these areas of intellectual exploration were valued and where I could find professors who pursued research interests related to lesbian and gay issues?

I sought advice from friends, teachers, and academic mentors familiar with schools of education. Some are professors, others are graduates of schools of education, still others are practitioners or activist colleagues who already had faced similar questions. I received a range of responses. Most suggested that if I were to apply to education schools, I discuss my interest and work on gay issues in education directly in the essay of my application. One colleague differed; he firmly warned me not to make gay issues central to either my application or my graduate program, citing concerns for my future employability in the field. No one I knew suggested specific

programs which might include gay issues as a focus and no one recommended professors with whom I could study in the geographic areas in which I was considering applying.

One education school I visited offers a concentration in Social and Cultural Studies which seemed to reflect my interest in "the study of education at its broadest" as "the study of sociocultural reproduction and transformation."[78] The school's program description included discussion of "a multicultural society divided by enormous inqualities," and emphasized the socially and historically situated nature of learning. I looked through the list of faculty interests which included education and liberation, social theory, feminist methodology, educational issues in inner city settings, and the construction of gender, race, and class. Of the program descriptions I had perused in catalogues of schools of education, this seemed to be the most suitable to my interests.

I decided to apply to this program in order to study the role education plays in the creation and extension of social and economic inequities impacting gay and lesbian and gender non-conforming students. My application fully discussed my interests, publications, and work experience--all quite clear and quite queer. I was delighted when a professor contacted me several months after I applied to tell me of my acceptance. He wanted to be sure I knew that--while the division's approval of my application amid a competetive field reflected their strong support for my interest in gay and lesbian issues in education--

expertise in this specific area of inquiry was not available within the division or, to his knowledge, within the education school. Division faculty certainly were available to mentor me in critical areas of interest, but the "gay part" of my work would need support outside the school of education. In this way, I would be pursuing my studies like many other students in the division. Because the program values cross-discipline work, many focus considerable energy in anthropology, ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, public policy, geography, and history. Faculty and classes in those divisions which emphasized lesbian and gay issues would comprise a large portion of the queer side of my graduate program.

Throughout my first semester in school I wore a pink triangle pin on my backpack each day and I'm not sure why. Initially, it may have been an easy way to resolve conflict about how, when, and to whom I should identify myself as gay. While a pink triangle is not recognized immediately by all as a signifier of gay or lesbian identity, in the back of my mind, the pin served as a check on myself that would not allow me to retreat back into the closet, no matter how homophobic I found graduate school to be.

During my first month on campus, I was relieved to find a surprising openness to gay issues in my classes at the school of education. My statistics teacher informally presented a problem to the class which compared the number of personal ads in a local paper which focused upon "men seeking women," "women seeking

men," "men seeking men," and "women seeking women." Another teacher introduced a lesson on the democratic tradition in education by discussing the bill proposed by Senator Jesse Helms which attempted to restrict teachers' discussion of gay issues in public schools. Because these matters were raised in a non-sensational manner, comfortably integrating gay references into the broad work of the class--and because no one seemed to blink an eye (as would have occurred 20 years ago)--I felt increased safety and comfort within the school. I also noticed that both teachers who raised these matters were men who had already disclosed to classes personal lives including their wives and children. These clearly were not closeted gay men launching a covert agenda in the classroom.

Primarily because of these casual references and discussions in classses, it would be untrue to describe the school of education as dominated by a profound silence on gay issues. A class offered by a professor in my division focused on contemporary questions facing schools and included a week of discussion about lesbian and gay issues. One of the section leaders invited me to make a presentation to her class, as the class reader included a piece I had written about coming out to my students when I was teaching middle school in Massachusetts. AIDS seemed to be a common topic of discussion in the school which provided what seemed like coded language allowing gay and lesbian students to recognize one another amid classroom discourse.

I did not go out of my way to link up with a broader community of lesbian and gay graduate students outside the school of education." A faculty member in comparative literature who organized a queer reading group for graduate students sent me monthly announcements of meetings but I never attended. I did not find the time to attend the campus' social group for queer graduate students. And while I took a sociology class on "sexual diversity" which focused on lesbian and gay sexuality, identity, and community, I did not make efforts to connect with my fellow students who were mostly undergraduates. I made my home in the school of education and found myself peacefully (if awkwardly) coexisting with the strange ways in which queer issues circulated within that environment.

Over the course of my first year, three things have emerged which seem odd to me. The first is that out of over 30 people on the school's faculty, I have been unable to find anyone who is either gay-identified or retains a significant academic interest on gay and lesbian issues. I have asked faculty members and more advanced students for "leads" but am consistently pointed towards professors outside of the education school. I have no reason to suspect that individual professors are closeted or "discreet" except when I play with the 10% figure attributed (incorrectly) to Kinsey's study and conclude statistically that several faculty members in the school simply must be lesbian or gay. The lack of research focus in this area by people within the school apparently mirrors silences throughout the discipline.

The second oddity about education school involves the ways in which my fellow graduate students appear to hold their identities as lesbians, gay men, or bisexuals. This is difficult to summarize based on informal encounters, but there are a large number of queer graduate students but I have met only a few who consider sexual orientation a key part of their lived-identities at school and fewer still who express interest or concern with gay issues in the educational arena. One second year student approached me in the campus grille one day and told me that he thought the pink triangle on my backpack was "so brave." When I pressed him to explain, he indicated that he was hesitant to be identified as gay because it might limit job opportunties. Another time, when I brought the topic of lesbian and gay youth into a discussion of access to educational opportunities in schools, a lesbian graduate student told me that she was unaware this was an issue in urban schools.

The third odd recognition I had this year involves ways in which I "closet" myself in certain school-related environments. I observed a middle-school classroom one afternoon and the teacher asked if I'd be willing to tell the children about my life and answer their questions. A panic attack immediately seized me: Would they ask if I were married? What would I say? What if they found out I were gay? I was shocked at how I attempted to wriggle out of the assignment and, when asked questions ("What sports team do you like?"), I didn't have the nerve to be honest (and say "None--I hate sports."). Another

time I found heterosexual colleagues assuming that my lover and I were monogamous and noted my tendency to "play up" my relationship with him to feign a heteronormative queer identity.

Once when classmates came over to our apartment for dinner, I found myself running about, nervously removing photographs, books, anything that would present an image of myself as a sexually-active gay man. What was this about? One straight female friend, during a conversation over lunch, mentioned that she was "glad" that I had a "conventional" relationship and wasn't one of "those wild Castro gay guys." I found myself torn between challenging her assumptions, and fitting in with her fantasies. I felt shivers of panic run up and down my spine, mingle with hints of shame about my "true" sex life and my conflict about being direct with her. After sweating for several minutes and feeling like an imposter, I simply said nothing.

It is unclear to me whether my experience is typical or different from other lesbian and gay graduate students who attend this school of education. I have spoken with several who attend other education schools and have noted similarities and differences in our experiences. Most of the time I am grateful that my research interests are strongly supported by the faculty of my division and motivated to find ways to take queer issues out of the margins of the discipline and make them a central focus of educational inquiry.

Sex Panic in the Classroom

Gayle Rubin has written extensively about the historical function of sex panics.[80] She defines moral panics as "the 'political moment' of sex, in which diffuse attitudes are channeled into political action and from there into social change."[81] Rubin cites several examples of moral panics, including the McCarthy era campaigns against homosexuals and the late 1970s "child pornography panic," and explains that conflicts over sexuality are "often fought at oblique angles, aimed at phony targets, conducted with misplaced passions, and are highly, intensely symbolic."

The intensification of sex panic which occurred in the aftermath of World War II. focused on homosexuals and its linkage to incidents involving the sexual abuse of children has been documented by George Chauncey, Jr.[82] Chauncey writes, "As a result of the press' preoccupation with the issue, the problem of sex crimes and 'sex deviation' became, to an astonishing extent, a staple of public discourse in the late 1940s and early 1950s."[83] During this period a series of gruesome murders of children served as the spark to trigger mass anxiety surrounding the perils of post-war American life for women and children. Escalating reports of murders attributed to "sexual deviancy" appeared in the nation's newspapers and magazines and spurred "good" citizens to demand that the state intensify policing efforts.

Chauncey argues that post-war sex panic functioned to reinforce pre-war social and sexual norms which had become increasingly weakened during the war mobilization. Estelle B. Freedman also makes this arguement and demonstrates that public concern surrounding the proliferation of lesbians and gay men in the public sphere merged with societal anxiety about the increasing freedom of children and youth in the intensification of post-war sex panic.[84] Freedman writes,

> Although the preoccupation with "sexual perversion" appears in retrospect, bizarre and irrational, the incorporation of gay women and men into the demonology of the McCarthy era required little effort. According to right-wing ideologues, leftist teachers poisoned the minds of their students; lesbians and homosexuals corrupted the bodies of the young.[85]

This is reflected more recently in a Gallup Poll which determined that 20% of those surveyed believed lesbians and gay men should not be employed as salespersons, 37% felt this way about their employment as military personnel, and 42% as doctors. When respondents considered employing gay people as elementary school teachers, the figure jumped to 60%.[86]

Those working with children attribute reluctance be openly gay to a range of sources which, when contextualized, appear legitimate. A recent essay by William G. Tierney and Robert A.

Rhoads succinctly summarizes common feelings:

> Jack, an assistant professor, comments on the problems of being gay: "You feel the pain of oppression, of having mirrored back to you everyday that you're different and that there are people who want to hurt you, and deny you basic human rights." Other faculty express similar feelings: Diane, a tenured faculty member, remains closeted because she fears she will be ostracized. Jeri feels that "coming out" is too big of a risk: "I never wanted to see myself leading a double life, but if I were out my supervisor could do some real damage to my life." A similar concern is voiced by John: "I'm concerned with the way people view me. I'm worried [about] what people will think, worried they will say, 'God, this person's a faggot.'"[87]

Commonly these concerns are traced to societal homophobia and heterosexism which are then defined and explicated. A publication of the American College Personnel Association focused on gay issues on campus, for example, presents a 27 page chapter which correlates homophobia with several factors, including an individual's gender role conformity and level of authoritarianism.[88] One overarching factor goes unstated which I believe lies at the root of these concerns and feeds a steady flow of anxiety and dread through the veins of queer teachers.

The legacy of moral panic remains lodged deeply in the collective consciousness of lesbian and gay teachers.

"Schoolteacher sex panic" functions in agitated imaginations as a repacious predator. It is constituted by powerfully constructed cultural messages which link filth, disgust, and shame to queer desires, bodies, and erotic imaginings. It places a rich backlog of constructions of the child as innocent, clean, vulnerable, and unknowing in a space along with the wicked and infectious queer. Add to this haphazard recipe the power-charged erotics of the teacher as schoolmaster (parent, dominatrix, mommy/daddy, boss, all-knowing god), and what is created is an intensely symbolic and ritualized space penetrated by dread, terror and unceasing anxiety.

Schoolteacher sex panic sits in the tidal pools of the psyche, unacknowledged and unattended, and drives an internalized system of self-surveillance and policing. This lurking sense of accusation, public outcry, and punitive sanctions is alive in what becomes a habitual, everyday practice of mediating co-constitutive identities as queers and schoolteachers. The messages delivered to us from the social worlds we occupy, become lived-reality in our everyday classroom lives, and repeatedly regenerate themselves. The vast apparatus of moral panic creates the scaffolding on which we construct what we think are "acceptable" public representations of our social and sexual worlds. We live the double-consciousness of the other, at times reading from distinct texts. The queer moving through our bodies

as heretical gestures, inflections, signifiers, and hints of possibility, is arrested, studied, and rechanneled into representations offering safe meanings which withstand social scrutiny.

Lesbian and gay teachers navigate a checkerboard of silences denials, and mutations as we go about the daily rituals of our lives. Pat Griffin, one of the early openly gay pioneers in the field of education, described how "fear of accusation" affected the ways teachers manage conflicting identities:

> Participants feared public accusation as a result of three specific instances. One instance was to be accused of child molestation or making sexual advances to students. As a result, all participants were conscious of how physical contact with same-sex students might be interpreted.

Some of us may be more than "conscious" of our kinesics around children; we may be hyper-aware of issues of physicality, spatial relations, and the geography of movement. Is any kind of touching worth the risk? What meanings will children and parents construe from my gait? Do I use my hands too much when speaking? May I be alone in my office with a fifth grade boy?

We become conscious of the semiotics of clothing, commodities, bodily appearance. How will this haircut impact classroom discipline? Are my pants too tight? Can I wear these

sunglasses around school or will they give me away? One friend who coaches women's basketball told me she wonders each day whether anyone has noticed that she never wears "women's clothing."

We may find ourselves deconstructing our voices--scrutinizing tone, pitch, volume, accent, emphasis, timbre--and reconstructing elocution. Do we have to learn to be ventriloquists? Have dual identities create bifurcated intonations? Does schoolteacher sex panic make us masters of doublespeak or are all queers, at base, bilingual?

Those who are at all open about gay identity in our work lives mediate a range of conflicting symbologies and meanings. What language do we use to articulate queer culture? In discussion, do we privilege those aspects of homosociality which correspond to values valorized by heteronormativity? Do we suburbanize our lives and appropriate "traditional family values"?

I ask these questions of lesbians and gay men whose lives include children because of what I perceive to be a recent escalation of rhetoric reifying notions of childhood and the family which have been long questioned by feminists, children's rights advocates, and critical theorists. A gay newspaper in Oklahoma is now named "Tulsa Family News." A line of books for children of lesbian and gay parents consistently presents conservative visions of childhood and family life." And an essay by gay writer Bruce Bawer has appeared in newspapers

throughout the nation entitled "Family Values Key to Gay Rights."[90]

At its core, societal inability to acknowledge the vast role which lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals of varied races and classes have filled in raising America's children--as authors of children's books, founders of children's service and social organizations, childcare workers and school teachers, coaches of athletic teams and religious leaders, youth advocates and policy makers, and as biological, foster, and adoptive parents--is rooted in judgements about not only gay identity and "alternative lifestyles," but about gay sex and desire. If it has been challenging to begin to confront anti-gay and anti-lesbian in schools under the rubric of "discrimination" and "homophobia," it is vastly more difficult to face the demonization of lesbian and gay sexuality which continues to serve as what Rubin names as "phony targets" for "misplaced passions."

Comments recorded in a research project on campus attitudes towards gay issues by faculty, staff, and students, provide examples of ways in which core components of the sex panic--disgust at queer sexuality, linkages to disease, criminality, and the corruption of children, and violation of heterosexualized public spheres--form the foundation of anti-gay attitudes. Two responsive are particularly telling:

- "I'm fed up with kow-towing to sexual perverts! It's enough to have to coexist with people who are

tearing down the traditional family structure. Don't cram them down my throat. If we extend special privileges to them, why not do the same for chld molesters, etc.? They're perverts too!"

o "It is obvious that homosexuals are genetically inferior to heterosexuals, and therefore should be eliminated, before they contaminate the rest of the 'STRAIGHT' world. If I were in a position of power I would implement this program to its fullest extent, to make the world a better place to live."[91]

Many lesbian and gay teachers are familiar with the social awkwardness masking terror when some heterosexuals are forced to share "personal spaces" with queers. One Midwest lesbian academic has noted "Some female colleagues even got visibly nervous around me in the bathroom..."[92] An essay discussing male early childhood teachers recounts one man's experience applying for a job:

"...at the job interview, the chairman of governors said what would I do if a little girl was upset and crying. So I said I would put her on my knee and give her a cuddle...the governor replied 'Oh no you couldn't do that, you would have to call the auxiliary.'"[93]

Narratives of lesbian and gay teachers offer examples of moral panic--internalized or external--and its effectiveness as a motivator of policing. A lesbian junior high school science teacher in rural Maine provides a case study which may encapsulate the core terror of every queer teacher:

> There were a couple of kids who were cheating on a test blatantly...So I told them they would both get zeros and they needed to come in after school...There had also been an incident on the playground...where somebody was talking about 'one of those fags with a limp wrist,' and that he was a real sicko...I said people who are gay are not necessarily sick...One of the girls went home and in the process of telling her mother that she had flunked the test for me, I think [she] must have softened that blow with telling this story about how I liked queer people so I obviously must be one."[4]

The girl's mother brought a complaint to the school's principal, but no punitive action occurred. A few years later, after the girl had left the community and the school then returned a year later, the teacher wrote a welcome back note to her.

> The mother got that note...[and] decided that...I was

> trying to come on to her daughter...She went straight to the superintendent...with this note saying that I was obviously trying to come on to her daughter and that I should be fired for that.

The superintendent initiated a series of letters to the teacher "about how I was never to be with students alone in my class at any time other than when I was teaching..." Soon afterwards, the teacher left her job, the profession, and the country. Moral panic takes its toll.

A college writing instructor provides an example of the way in which sex panic operates internally. The man had not disclosed his sexual orientation to students, and considered his public identity as "unlabeled" and "respectful of all people." A surprising confrontation calls forth the everpresent schoolteacher sex panic from the recesses of his mind:

> A student recently offered to give me a lift in his car to the garage where my car was being tuned up. At one point during the ride, however, he became silent for a few minutes and then suddenly said, "I came out three weeks ago." My initial reaction was to remain silent, primarily because I had not expected to be made privy to such a revelation, especially not by someone who was stereotypically the idealized straight college student: goodlooking, intelligent, bright-eyed, personable, and (most significant)

usually surrounded by attentive female classmates. In addition, I was alone with a student and was concerned about what rumors, if any, might be started if he related this incident to his friends or to other faculty members."[95]

Sex-based gossip, rumor, and public scandal are part of the apparatus of the sex panic. While this teacher fingers surprise as the primary factor triggering his silence, his own words suggest otherwise. Forbidden desires may lurking in the subtext might ignite internal anxiety. On some level this teacher finds the student attractive. Confined in an enclosed space with a handsome student suddenly queered by intimate disclosure, schoolteacher sex panic bursts forth and freezes action.

In a paper entitled "The Sexualized Context of American Public High Schools," Donald Reed writes, "Although not generally recognized or acknowledged, the contemporary American high school presents itself as a highly sexualized organizational environment."[96] Reed argues that "the school environment is exceedingly important in establishing the appropriate heterosexual identities of children," and is thus simultaneously "heterosexualized" and "anti-homosexualized." He documents a variety of ways in which public humiliation, peer harassment, and institutional silencing function to preserve heteronormativity through schooling.

Desire in the classroom is the unspoken issue which must be grappled with if we are to undermine schoolteacher sex panic.

Reed presents the school as a "heterosexualized" space, but I am arguing here for a remapping of the school as a sexualized space where a rich mix of erotics circulates and is repressed and denied in educational discourse. It is not acknowledged in classrooms, and it is not included in the course listings of schools of education. Instead, profound anxiety about desire is thwarted, deflected, and redirected into moral panic and is projected upon stigmatized populations.

Michelle Fine has written about the "historic silencing within public schools of conversations about sexuality, contraception, and abortion, as well as the absence of a discourse of desire."[97] A parallel failure of schools of education to serve as spaces for extended conversation about desire, sexuality, and the politics of erotics, has carved out huge disciplinary silences and led to vast abrogations of responsibility on the part of the field of education. A collective inability to develop a language which brings educational theory into the service of sexuality has allowed schools of education to make only a cameo appearance in the multi-disciplinary theatre in which discussions involving desire are staged."

How does this occur? The ideological apparatus of the sex panic serves to buttress scaffolding of homophobia and heterosexism which carefully and with deliberation constructs an architecture of caution, omission, euphemism, and misrecognitions. Queers who work with children feel no choice

but to compartmentalize lives, separate our school selves from our queer bodies, and allow the threat of economic retribution to vanquish authenticity. We find ways to live with ourselves and our decisions and often explain to ourselves that decisions aren't decisions. What is the impact of compromise on our positions in our schools? What is its effect on our desires? When we work our way into the sticky webs of our disciplines and institutions, and settle into comfortable uncomfortability, do we gain or lose motivation for collective action?

The silences of schools of education constitute nothing less than the failure to lead. The field long ago relinquished sex education to social workers and sexologists. Over the past dozen years, it has contributed little to HIV prevention, ceding that contentious terrain to schools of public health. Currently it is in the process of yielding authority for queer studies to English departments and humanities centers. The directory of lesbian and gay studies lists 109 scholars in the field of English literature, 84 historians, and 64 anthropologists/sociologists. The number of individuals listed in the field of education is 13."

The responsibilities of schools of education in addressing lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues will not be discharged until educators become motivated to do their part in interrogating controversial and vexing questions amid an increasingly hostile environment. This is not a question of turf, as if disciplines could carve the universe into pieces of inquiry and discourse to

distribute between branches of the academy. It is about whether we believe the field of education is constructed upon values, paradigms, and visions of the world which have something to offer queer teenagers, lesbian teachers, or gay male professors beyond colonization or social control. Ultimately, it is about whetehr educational leaders will find the courage to fulfill the mission and preserve the integrity of the discipline.

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APPENDIX

School of Education Documents Reviewed

Bank Street Graduate School of Education

- Catalogue 1994-1996
- Application for Admission to the Graduate School

Boston University

- School of Education, 1994/95 Graduate Programs

Harvard University

- School of Education, 1993-1994 Bulletin
- Application for Admission

Stanford University

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